

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
(FONSI)**

Department of Veterans Affairs

Phase 4 New Bed Tower and Infrastructure Improvements Project

James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital and Clinics, Tampa, Florida

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BACKGROUND

The James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital (JAHVH) is located at 13000 Bruce B. Downs Boulevard in Tampa, Florida (Figure 1 in the Draft SEA). The JAHVH is a tertiary care teaching hospital providing services and patient care to the veterans of Central Florida. The hospital also provides to veterans a full range of inpatient and outpatient care including medicinal, surgical, psychological, and neurological care.

Due to favorable economic conditions in 2010, the New South Bed Tower and Infrastructure Improvements were introduced as a scope change into the VA's internal scope review process to improve medical care at the JAHVH. The New South Bed Tower was proposed as an alternative to the original "Phase 4" renovation of existing patient bed units in the Building 1 bed tower. The New South Bed Tower and Infrastructure Improvements scope would better address the JAHVH's substantial deficiency in the number of available beds necessary for the JAHVH to provide adequate medical care to veterans in Central Florida.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The existing Building 1 bed tower was built in 1972 and the infrastructure is aging and unable to be modified to meet the VA's and the healthcare industry's family-focused model of care, which requires additional support space, as opposed to patient bedrooms with minimal support space. The existing bed tower's footprint is insufficient to support adequately-sized and functionally-efficient inpatient units. Although bed unit renovations within Building 1 (the existing bed tower) were completed within the last several years, there was insufficient space for the renovations to include support space for staff physicians, therapists, and case workers, and the family-oriented space called for in today's patient and family-focused model of care. The Proposed Action results from a defined need to improve hospital care at JAHVH, now and in future decades. The purpose of the New South Bed Tower is to modernize inpatient hospital bed units and the supporting facilities and infrastructure.

PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action includes the New South Bed Tower, a six level, 220,000 gross square feet (GSF) bed tower connected to the east side of Building 1 (Figures 5 and 6 in the Draft SEA). The tower would contain 100 Medical, Surgical and Nursing (MS&N) inpatient beds, 40 intensive care unit (ICU) beds, associated support space, lobby, public amenities, Main Security Office, patient drop-off and entry, and connection to Building 1. The New South Bed Tower would serve as the new main entry for the hospital. Site work and utilities associated with construction of the new tower would be necessary, including reconfiguration of the existing Diamond surface parking lot and a new entry drive.

The New South Bed Tower would be state-of-the-art, meeting all current VA and industry standards for size, function, and infrastructure. It would be designed to maximize programmatic flexibility and anticipate future trends in healthcare design. Quality of care would be enhanced by allowing for the most efficient unit sizes and providing optimal adjacencies between spaces. For example, the standard 24-bed MS&N units would be located adjacent to their companion ICU bed units to promote patient and staff safety by minimizing patient movement.

The New South Bed Tower would allow the existing Building 1 bed tower to undergo a less costly and more programmatically-appropriate future renovation providing outpatient diagnostic and testing services and support functions that serve the hospital. The New South Bed Tower is also intended to serve as the new main entry for the hospital, improving campus way finding and patient access, as well as presenting a new “face” to the Tampa Bay community and reaffirming the VA’s commitment to caring for our Nation’s heroes at the highest level.

The proposed Satellite Central Utility Plant (CUP) is considered necessary because renovating the existing plant (Building 39) would be problematical.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in January 2010 for the Polytrauma Expansion & Bed Tower Upgrade project that included four phases: Phase 1 – a new 1500-space parking garage; Phase 2 – expansion of the Polytrauma facility; Phase 3 – a new therapy pool building; and Phase 4 – upgrades to the Bed Tower. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on January 21, 2010. Since the VA now proposes to construct a new bed tower under Phase 4, the VA has prepared a Supplementary Environmental assessment (SEA) in accordance with the regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), (Public Law 91-190, 42 USC 4321-4347 January 1, 1970), amendments, and VA’s Implementing Regulations (38 CFR Part 26). The SEA, entitled “U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Supplementary Environmental assessment for Phase 4 New Bed Tower and Infrastructure Improvements Project, James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital, Tampa, Florida, 2015” is incorporated by reference in its entirety into this FONSI.

In addition to the proposed action, a No Action Alternative was evaluated in the SEA.

This environmental assessment methodology uses the following terms in assessing environmental impacts:

- **Short-term Impact:** Short-term impacts are those that would occur only with respect to a particular activity, for a finite period, or only during the time required for construction or installation activities.

- Long-term Impact: Long-term impacts are those that are more likely to be persistent and chronic.
- Direct Impact: A direct impact is caused by an action and occurs around the same time at or near the location of the action.
- Indirect Impact: An indirect impact is caused by an action and might occur later in time or be farther removed in distance but still be a reasonably foreseeable outcome of the action.
- Beneficial-and-not-significant: This impact represents an improvement in existing conditions and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.
- None-to-negligible: A potential impact of this severity would be barely detectable and an EIS is not required for this impact.
- Minimal-to-moderate: A potential impact that is less-than-significant and would not require specific mitigation measures, other than those dictated by regulatory and permitting requirements and an EIS is not required for this impact.
- Significant-if-not-mitigated: A potential impact of this severity would require specific mitigation measures beyond those associated with permit requirements but an EIS is not required for this effect.
- Significant-and-immitigable: A potential impact of this severity would have to be evaluated in an EIS.

Environmental impacts may be either significant or not significant environmental impacts. The following environmental impacts are not significant environmental impacts because an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for these environmental impacts:

- Beneficial-and-not-significant;
- None-to-negligible;
- Minimal-to-moderate; and
- Significant-if-not-mitigated.

Summary of Environmental Impacts is as follows:

Construction

- Beneficial-and-not-significant: Socioeconomics (ST); Environmental Justice (ST).
- None-to-negligible: Land Use and Zoning (ST); Cultural Resources (ST); Topography, Geology and Soils (ST for topography); Wildlife and Habitat (ST); Floodplains, Wetlands and Coastal Zone Management (ST for wetlands and CZM); Community Services (ST); Traffic, Transportation and Parking (ST for transportation); Utilities (ST); Alternative Energy (ST); Cumulative Impacts (LT for those listed here); Potential for Generating Substantial Controversy (ST).
- Minimal-to-moderate: Aesthetics (ST); Air Quality (ST); Topography, Geology and Soils (ST for geology and soils); Noise (ST); Hydrology and Water Resources (ST);

Wetlands and Coastal Zone Management (ST for floodplains); Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials (ST); Transportation and Parking (ST for traffic and parking); Cumulative Impacts (ST for those listed here).

- Significant-if-not-mitigated: None.
- Significant: None.

Operations (All impacts are Long Term)

- Beneficial-and-not-significant: Aesthetics; Community Services (medical services); Traffic, Transportation and Parking (traffic); Cumulative Impacts (traffic, transportation, and parking).
- None-to-negligible: Land Use and Zoning; Air Quality; Cultural Resources; Topography, Geology and Soils; Noise; Hydrology and Water Resources; Wildlife and Habitats; Floodplains, Wetlands and Coastal Zone Management (wetlands and CZM); Socioeconomics; Community Services (all with the exception of medical services); Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials; Traffic, Transportation and Parking (transportation and parking); Utilities; Alternative Energy Sources; Environmental Justice; Cumulative Impacts (all others except traffic, transportation, and parking).
- Minimal-to-moderate: Wetlands and Coastal Zone Management (floodplains).
- Significant-if-not-mitigated: None.
- Significant: None.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A Notice of Availability of the draft Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives (DOPAA) was published in the *Tampa Bay Tribune* on 27 through 29 March 2015 and in the *University of South Florida Oracle* on 26 and 30 March 2015. A public meeting was held on April 9, 2015 to obtain public input on DOPAA that was prepared to conduct a SEA. The VA finalized DOPAA on May 15, 2015. A NOA for draft SEA and draft FONSI is tentatively scheduled for publication in the *Tampa Bay Tribune* on 19 through 21 July 2015. A public meeting is scheduled on 29 July 2015.

All substantial public comments will be addressed in the final SEA, and considered in the determination of FONSI.

DETERMINATION

The environmental assessment of all project attributes considered did not result in "Significant impact" during construction and operations. Also, the environmental assessment of all project attributes considered did not result in "significant-if-not-mitigated impacts" during construction and operations.

The construction and operation of the proposed project would not result in any adverse impacts on the natural or human environments that would require mitigation to reduce

impacts to less than significant, nor preclude the issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

A FONSI will be finalized if a review of EA results in a determination that the implementation of the proposed project as described would not constitute a major Federal action that would have significant impact upon the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA of 1969. If a FONSI is determined to be appropriate for this project then the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed action is not required. This FONSI becomes a federal document when evaluated and signed by the responsible VA official.